A Statement of Concern

In this issue of the ANLetter the editorial space is being relinquished to the Statement of Concern that has been adopted at the Ninth Meeting of the General Body at EQUATIONS. The process of adoption was one which involved all levels of functioning in the society and therefore reflects the various kinds of concerns.

As Equations enters its 10th year of existence and experience in critiquing tourism issues in India, it is challenged by several concerns on the horizon today, a scenario that is likely to persist and extend in both magnitude and implications as we approach the 21st century.

- World Bank - IMF led structural adjustment and liberalisation in India and the promotion of tourism as part of an integrated economic agenda, heralded by the 'New Economic Policy', especially the implications of the recent General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS);
- the evolution of tourism in India from its early 'cultural tourism' days to aggressive development today: Special Tourism Areas, privatisation of tourism infrastructure, luxury hotels, proliferation of domestic airlines, open skies policy allowing charter flights to cater to 'mass tourism', golf resorts wooing upmarket Japanese and European tourists, multinational and multilateral interests in Indian tourism, opening up of hitherto 'restless areas' in the Northeast.
- unresolved questions of land alienation in India, within the context of large-scale conversion and acquisition of revenue and agricultural land for hotels/golf courses/resorts;
- the ecological implications of tourism in coastal areas (water sports), high mountain ranges (skiing, winter sports), off-road and Himalayan car rallies sponsored by multinational companies, uncontrolled release of solid waste into the natural environment, inadequate enforcement of sewage treatment requirements by hotels and its effect on local health and drinking water sources;
- the destruction of flora and fauna in wildlife and so-called ecotourism, the relationship between sanctuaries and adivasis, the inequal distribution of economic benefits;
- the commodification and museumisation of cultural heritage - art, artefacts, architecture - and cultural forms - music, dance, related local traditions as tourist attractions (all in the name of 'heritage tourism' and 'showcasing India')
- the reality of 'international understanding' at the level of the petty trader, the hawker, the women and children who prostitute themselves, and other informal sector 'hangers-on' of the tourist economy;
- drug-peddling, trade of women/children as commercial sex workers, and their growing links with international tourism.

As such, the challenge to concerned people and groups, including ourselves, is undoubtedly to continue with and push forward efforts that:
- support local struggles and movements against destructive five-star tourism in destinations, other than those which are in any way communal, sectarian or exclusivist.
- raise at various forums and in various ways fundamental questions about tourism such as: who benefits and who profits from, who pays for, and who loses, because of tourism development?
- and, arising from this, evolve conscious, holistic policies as alternatives to the existing models and practises, working with like-minded people towards these objectives.

Towards a critique: Some Statements

In the context of neo-colonisation
- tourism has to be viewed in the context of a development model which has a political character;
- tourism development has taken place along with increased elitism, authoritarianism, militarism and various forms of State repression in different parts of the world: all of these are threats to the culture, economy and empowerment of communities;
- tourism development along with the globalisation process threatens the sovereignty of a nation (in the broadest definition of 'nation');
- tourism eulogises a certain consumptive and luxurious lifestyle which is unsustainable by any means;
- tourism as a harbinger of goodwill amongst people is a false propaganda;
- tourism promotes net outflow of capital to the global market economy, especially to the so-called developed nations;
- tourism promotes net flow of capital to affluent sections internally;
- the tourism economy promotes the conversion of drugs to cash linked to the arms trade; and,
- tourism is based on the objectified view of the world where beaches, sanctuaries and so on are seen as objects of pleasure which negates the sanctity of the objects as well as of possible meaningful relationships between peoples and their environments.

We welcome a wider discussion, and your comments and analysis would be useful in further sharpening the discourse on tourism in the context of development.

K.T. Suresh
Tourism and Environment

Kamal Nath

Union Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

One of the most controversial and 'active' subjects today is environment. And, tourism is intrinsically related to environment.

Tourism represents around six per cent of world trade, and almost 13 per cent of the total global consumer spending. The significance of these two factors cannot be gainsaid.

Tourism, let us face it, is an industry. Like any commercial venture, investment in the industry has to be commensurable with profitability. But unlike most other industries, tourism is essentially based on a good environment, and should therefore, naturally be more concerned about its proper protection, preservation and further development, in its own interest, if not out of altruistic motives.

Tourism depends heavily on an authentic socio-cultural environment and an upspoilt natural environment.

However, the upsurge witnessed in tourism demands vast infrastructural facilities like hotels, restaurants and roads, which affect the environment. Even when care is taken to minimise this adverse impact, tourists by their very numbers and behaviour, create certain problems.

In India, an environmental impact assessment is now being insisted upon as a pre-requisite for all major tourism projects. Some areas, such as the Aravallis, have been declared as being eco-sensitive, and commercial development in and around national parks and wildlife sanctuaries is being strictly regulated.

Unrestrained commercialisation has eroded the stabiity of our coastline. Beach resorts require enormous quantities of sweet water to cater to the lifestyles of rich tourists. Over exploitation of underground water creates an imbalance, making well-water in coastal villages undrinkable, and salinising fields to a point where agriculture is seriously affected.

Availability of water is also a major problem in the hill stations, giving rise to problems of sewage and solid waste disposal.

Another crucial issue is that of energy consumption. Tourist facilities should be so designed as to be energy efficient, taking advantage of the sun in hill-stations and wind directions and breezes on the plains and coastal areas, to reduce heating, cooling and the air-conditioning requirements to the barest minimum.

A large number of tourists, both international and domestic, are attracted to national parks and sanctuaries which afford them glimpses of wildlife, mountains, jungles, rivers and lakes and also allow for the new fangled 'adventure tourism', hiking, skiing and other similar activities.

All this is very well, and certainly deserves to be encouraged, since quite apart from the income generated by tourism, it also increases public awareness about nature and all its beauties. The mistake is when we confuse wildlife and adventure tourism with picnics.

Underlying everything we do must be an empathy for wildlife and a respect for its habitat. We find empty bottles, empty cans and plastic bags, not only marring the beauty but also, threatening animals who have been known to choke and die form eating the food off discarded plastic wrappers or containers.

In every case it is necessary, to do a detailed study about the carrying capacity of any tourist location, be it a hill-station or a beach resort or a wildlife sanctuary. By 'carrying capacity', as we all know, we mean the load of people that a particular area can take.

Until recently, tourism in our country was mainly religious tourism. Pilgrims who visited the holy places were humble and had great respect for the local communities living in these places. In turn, the visitors were welcomed with open arms and open minds and given all cooperation and assistance. There was nothing obtrusive in the attitudes of the pilgrims which would offend the sensibilities of local inhabitants. But the present scenario, as we know, is different.

Tourism contains within itself the potential of developing into one of the most eco-friendly industries — provided that there is a re-orientation of perspective and an acceptance of the basic tenets of conservation.

This article has been excerpted from the Eighth Som Nath Chib Memorial Lecture organised by the International Fellowship Foundation of India.

Ecologist or hotelier?

Nitya Jacob

A 13-year old battle for Indian beaches is winding down towards a denouement as the protagonists — environmentalists and the hotel industry — await the final word from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF).

At stake is the "development" of several beaches of India. The hotel and tourism industry wants freedom to put up hotels and adventure sports facilities smack on the water front. But environmentalists argue this would destroy certain fragile eco-systems as well as traditional lifestyles along the coast.

The draft amendments appear to have been issued to appease the hotel lobby which has been clamouring for permission to build five-star hotels on Goan and Oriyan beaches wherever they wish. "In effect," says Shyam Chainani, honorary secretary of the Bombay Environment Action Group, "The hotel industry has been allowed to build wherever it wants as the proposed amendments give discretionary powers to MEF."

The 1991 notification divided a 500 m strip of land along the coast into four coastal regulation zones (CRZ) and laid down the activities that were allowed on each.

MEF's 1991 notification bans certain activities within the CRZ. These included setting up industries or expansion of existing ones; setting up fish processing units and warehouses; discharge of wastes and effluents, either municipal or industrial; mining of sand,

rock or other minerals; harvesting ground water and alteration of
the natural topography.

In CRZ-I, which comprises ecologically sensitive areas as well as
national parks, sanctuaries, etc., no new construction is to be
permitted within 500 m of the HTL.

In CRZ II, which comprises areas already developed up to the shore
line, buildings are permitted on the landward side of existing struc-
tures subject to municipal guidelines. This means if an area has been
declared to be within municipal limits, i.e., it is an urban area and
appropriately developed, buildings can be constructed anywhere.

In the next zone, CRZ III, an area of 200 m from the HTL is a no-
development zone. Land within 200 m to 500 m of the HTL can be
developed with the MEF's approval. CRZ III pertains to relatively
undisturbed or rural areas. Villages can expand in this zone, subject
to the precondition that new construction in keeping with
traditional rights, the total covered area does not exceed 33 per cent
of the total plot size and the maximum height of a building is less
than 9m.

CRZ IV covers islands — Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep and
other smaller islands — and pertains to land within 200 m of the
HTL. It also bans the use of coral and sand for construction or
industrial purposes as, says Shekhar Singh of the Indian Institute of
Public Administration, Indian coral reefs have been adversely
affected by pollution and coastal "development". Buildings may be
constructed only with MEF's permission.

While MEF's draft guidelines further define HTL and leave the four
CRZs untouched, they are somewhat soft on the hotel industry. The
original notification banned any construction within 200 m of the
HTL but the amendment could change that. "Provided the Central
government may, after taking into account geographical features
and overall coastal zone management plans, and for reasons to be
recorded in writing, permit any construction subject to such
conditions and restrictions as it may deem fit," the amendments go.

Within a year of the 1991 notification, India's nine coastal states were
supposed to prepare their respective CRZ plans but only one, Pondicherry, has done so till date. However, Goa and Daman and
Diu submitted plans in which large stretches of untouched coastal
areas were demarcated as CRZ II which meant they were urban
areas and could be used to "develop" tourism and hotels. Both were
asked to modify their CRZ plans by a committee set up to verify the
state plans.

Other states have been less than interested, largely due to a lack of
political interest.

The entire politics of coastal development revolves around the
demarcation of CRZ II. Large areas of the coastal states are
placed in this category in the state plans, and the MEF clears the
plan, it will open the floodgates for any development in that area.

Tourism and hotels are a major foreign exchange earner for the
country but the kind of hotels planned — 5 stars — do nothing for
the local economy and are very heavy on infrastructure. Instead,
one suggestion is that, the tourism industry should aim at no-star
tourism or paying-guest tourism.

That would be an acceptable trade-off between coastal development
and environmental interests. More importantly, local people would
benefit instead of being caught in the cross-fire between the two
lobbies.

The Pioneer

---

**Goa Green Groups Protest New Coastal Draft**

**Rahul Goswami**

Environmentalists and green groups in Goa have objected to the
draft amendments to the coastal regulation zones notification of the ministry of environment and forests, dated February 19, 1991.

The draft amendments to the earlier notification were dated November 11, 1993, and are seen by environmentalists as "shaped to satiate the greed of the hotel industry in Goa".

The draft amendments relate to the definition of the high tide line, the extent of the no-development zones on the coastal stretches or in terms of distance from the high tide line, the fencing of private property in coastal areas, the construction of basements by private developers, the basis for calculating floor space index, and the status of sand dunes.

The Goa Foundation at Mapusa in Goa, the Goa chapter of the Indian Heritage Society, the oldest environmental NGO in Goa, Nirmal Vishwa, the Jagrut Goenkaranchi Foz (Vigilant Goans' Army) from the state have protested against the draft amendments.

The National workshop on Human Rights, Environment and the Law, and the Bombay Environmental Action Group have raised objections to the amendments following the B.B. Vohra Committee report on coastal regulation zones. These groups consider the amendment as a "sell-out" to the luxury hotels and resorts lobby in Goa.

The first regulation advocated no constructions within 500 m of the high tide line. In 1985, that clause was relaxed for Goa, Trivandrum, Mahabalipuram and Puri-Konarak to allow beach resorts beyond the 200 m stretch of the high tide line. With the pressure of population and the growth of the tourism industry, the Centre expressed the need for a detailed coastal area management plan.

Under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, a notification declared coastal stretches as coastal regulation zones (CRZ) and graded restrictions were imposed on development therein.

According to the Goa Foundation, under pressure from the hotel industry, the Centre was persuaded to appoint an expert committee in 1992 to examine the issues raised by hoteliers regarding the CRZ restrictions.

The committee was set up under the chairmanship of B.B.Vohra, with 14 participants from several state governments and ministries.

The most vociferous objections to the relaxation of the high tide line from 100 m to 50 m came from the Goa Foundation and the Indian Heritage Society. "Any ambiguity may permit destruction of precious estuarine/rivering flora", Noronha of the Goa Foundation
wrote to the secretary, MOEF. Claude Alvares, secretary of the Goa Foundation, emphasised that it is inappropriate at this stage to consider relaxation.

“They (the hoteliers) want to use the relaxations for rocky headlands and promontories and extend them to all coastal stretches.” “The beach areas are sensitive areas and should not be allowed to be destroyed by the hotel lobby which has become a powerful disseminator of corruption and prostitution in Goa,” Noronha added.

Tourism Policy of Karnataka
An Overview

Chandrashekar Belegere

In the federal set-up, as conceived by the Constitution of India, the States and Union Territories are responsible for the development of tourism. Since natural resources and historical monuments are the ultimate sources for tourism, the policy initiatives in the tourism sector necessarily have to undertake the preservation and augmentation of these resources. An objective evaluation of the Tourism Policy as implemented by the State of Karnataka reveals several lacunae in this regard.

In the context of competitive liberalisation, tourism is increasingly being comprehended as a harbinger of easy remittances and foreign exchange. Thus any development in the sector is conceived as to maximise the flow of foreign exchange which in turn would enable further economic growth. In the pursuit of foreign exchange, the policy forgets to take note of the interests of the people who are “toured upon”.

The Tourism Policy of Karnataka came into implementation on May 30, 1992. It was formulated within the broad framework provided by the National Action Plan on Tourism, 1992. Essentially, the Karnataka policy underscores the importance of preserving and maintaining the historical and natural centres of tourism attraction in the State.

However, the ultimate intentions of the policy seem to have got lost in the ever-increasing emphasis placed on adventure tourism and sports tourism. These varieties of tourism concentrate on how to make use of natural endowments like rocks, rivers and forests for enhancing the adventure component in tourism. The policy aims at obtaining the assistance of voluntary organisations and other non-governmental institutions in this endeavour. It proposes to create golf courses and recreation centres so as to attract tourist traffic.

Sports and Adventure Tourism

The apparent developmental overtones in the policy hide the potential dangers to nature and society at large. Provided the policy is implemented fully as envisaged, places like Nagarhole, Bandipur, and Tanneerbhavi would witness tourist congestion. It is not surprising that tourists will flock together at such places hoping to get the instant thrills of modern sports and adventure facility within the secluded, virgin, natural surroundings. These are the short-cuts for modern adventurous “Nirvana”.

Parallels may be drawn to the happenings at Hampi — the centre of cultural and political heritage of Karnataka. The place has been infested with hippies and foreign tourists in search of salvation through sex and aphrodisiacs. (See also article on pg 14)

Any policy which keeps the inter-generational equity in mind will never attempt to interfere with nature inadvertently. It would rather aim at preserving and augmenting the heritage and habitat. The attraction of these centres of tourism lies not so much in their vulnerability to gang-rapes but in their holistic serene appeal. The policy makers need to look at these centres as places of rich natural resources rather than as secluded, savage places to be exploited.

The “Golf Philosophy”

EQUATIONS have already made public the welfare implications of creating large infrastructure for golf. This game of the rich exemplifies how scarce capital, scarce land and cheap labour can be misdirected by wrong priorities. The ultimate impact of the “golf philosophy” is nothing but all-round impoverishment.

Perhaps, the policy fails to take cognizance of the fact that the main objective of development of tourism is the development of the economy, which in turn would ensure raising of the general standards of living. But if the means to that end itself impoverishes the local population, creates health hazards and brings in water scarcity and land degradation, should we not question the very policy itself?

Master Plan

The policy envisages a master Plan of Rs. 157.18 crores for creating basic tourism infrastructure. It is expected that Rs. 70.03 crores would be invested by the private sector for the construction of tourist accommodation. The government, both centre and State together, would put in an amount of Rs. 87.15 crores for the Master Plan.

In effect, the Master Plan aims at establishing luxury and “star” hotels in all centres of tourist importance. Predominantly, the hotels will be in the private sector with minimum regulations and restrictions to bind their operations. The Department of Tourism, as such, does not have the necessary mandate to promulgate restrictive regulations in this regard. The outcome of such a situation is too obvious to be stated.

North Karnataka

A major lacuna in the policy appears to be the crass neglect of the centres of tourism in Northern Karnataka. Bijapur, Bagalkot, Balki, Bedar and Chitradurga hold great tourist potential in view of their historical importance, yet there is no comprehensive policy which aims at preserving and protecting them.

Conclusion

The above analysis provides a preliminary over-view of the loopholes found in the Karnataka Policy. An in-depth study of the policy and its implications are being carried out by EQUATIONS.
Children in Goa Unmask Problems Caused by Tourism

Goa’s state government and its influential hotel lobby praise tourism no end. But truth, as they say, comes from the mouth of babes. And how!

School children in this state are themselves beginning to unmask the true nature of tourism. They recently were unexpectedly blunt in pointing out to top officials and tourism industry quarters in Goa, how the so-called ‘smokeless industry’ can have a strong negative impact on Third World societies.

Six of ten schoolkids taking part in a contest to mark World Tourism Day strongly censured Goa’s tourism policy, as politicians and officials on the dais turned red-faced.

“The Pearl of the Orient (Goa) could turn out to be the dustbin of the world,” warned student Marisa Coutinho. Tourism which once brought Goa a lot of fame was now turning into a major problem, she said. “Our beaches are like a dumping ground. They are getting buried deep under a maze of concrete blocks, five-star hotels and holiday homes,” she charged. “Tourism, unless controlled, could soon become part of the hydra-headed monster destroying our environment,” she said.

Schoolgirl Shraddha Islu noted how wildlife tourism spelt litter, garbage, sewage, and vehicles roaring through sanctuaries. She forthrightly warned that the profit motive should not be allowed to damage the environment. Officials had poor control over tourist’s behaviour, she added.

Cherryl D’Souza, another early-teen student said tourism was fostering out-of-place values. “They (local youth) can now make a good hamburger, but not a bebinca (a tasty local sweet),” she complained. Besides she underlined tourism’s link with drug peddling, prostitution, and the disproportionate amounts of “water, fish, seafood and flowers” demanded by luxury hotels.

Citing examples from near home, Gracy D’Souza noted how hotel wastes were being dumped into creeks, and small villages like Calangute had become concrete jungles. Gracy called for blocking permissions for hotels which threatened further harm to Goa. “Tourism may come, and tourism may go, but we should be able to remain in a happy, green Goa,” she argued.

Tourism was giving youth an aversion to work. Youth were copying tourists to draw attention by unconventional behaviour, schoolboy Satyanarayana said, pointing to the ingress of AIDS — first detected in Goa among foreign tourists — and the high cost of living in Goa.

“Goa remains a favoured domestic tourist spot,” said student Marilou Alberto, “but for all the wrong reasons, including wines and Whites (scantily-clad sunbathing tourists) on the beach.” (Goa has a cheap-liquor policy).

Only a couple of students echoed much-touted arguments that tourism brings in “jobs and foreign exchange”.

From a pamphlet used in the protest against the Great Elephant March, 1994.

The Mock Pooram

Is this the ‘Pooram’?
The ‘Thrissur Pooram’
Hailed by the world?
Is this the festival of festivals?
The harvest of our heritage?
Is this the Melam?
The festival of rhythm
Where we feel the pulse
Of our heroic ancestors?
Is this the ‘Melam’
The festival of communal harmony?
The sublime spirit of secular culture?
Is this the ‘Pooram’
The festival of colours
The festival of rest and work
Man’s ode to the immortal
Dance of nature?
Is this the Pooram?
The festival of love and dream
The festival of memory and genius?
No
No
No
This is the mock Pooram
Cooked up by the
Pimps of the IMF and the World Bank
Enemies of the people
Enemies of the people’s culture!
This is the mock Pooram,
The modern wicked white-magic
To sell the beauty of the country
To sell the flesh of the country
To sell the spirit of the country
YES
YES
YES
This is the mock Pooram
The Prostitution of culture
WE HATE THIS
WE HATE THIS
WE HATE THIS

By K. C. Sunnarapillai, Malayalam poet
Source: Janakikse Prathikarana Sangham, Kerala

But at the end of the day, two staunch critics were among the first three contest winners. World Tourism Day 1993’s focus, oddly enough, was environmental protection.

— TWN Feature
Dr. Dinabandhu Sahoo

The Supreme Court was informed by the Counsel representing the Government of India that the Union Ministry of Environment has rejected the controversial proposal of constructing the deluxe Beach resort on the Puri-Konark coastal belt. The project envisaged at a cost of Rs. 862 crores involved felling of more than 5 lakhs of trees and de-reservation of 2,227 acres reserved forest land. It would have also caused a serious threat to several endangered species like black-buck and monitor lizard. The experts were of the opinion that if the tree cover was gone, the entire area would be exposed to the onslaughts of cyclones and tidal waves. The trees were planted by the British Government as early as 1913 to protect the inland area from cyclone.

Ever since the Orissa Government sent the proposal to the Union Forest and Environment Ministry for clearance, it faced strong protest from environmentalists countrywide. In addition to this, the project also became a big political controversy.

Way back in August '93 as many as 12 members of Parliament from various political parties wrote to the Prime Minister to reject the proposal. Then in November 1993 several Janata Dal MLAs in Orissa State Assembly opposed the project tooth and nail. It took a very interesting turn in January 1994 when 30 MPs wrote a letter to the Prime Minister to clear the project. Interestingly some MPs have signed both the letters.

It is important to mention that during the '80s, the then Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, did not allow a single hotel to come up in the area. Five years back when Mr. Biju Patnaik was in opposition, he also opposed the project, but now is strongly in favour of the project.

When the matter came up for final hearing before a Division Bench of the Supreme Court consisting of Hon'ble Justices Mr. Kuldip Singh and Mr. B.D. Hansaria they took the Government of Orissa to task for ignoring the environmental aspects of the project. The Government through their Counsel told the Court that the original proposal of constructing deluxe hotels, etc. on Puri-Konark beach covering an area of 2,227 acres forest land is withdrawn.

The Supreme Court was not satisfied with the mere withdrawal of the project by the State of Orissa. The Court directed to the State of Orissa that they shall ensure that no tree should be felled in the proposed area. The petition filed by the environmentalists was disposed off accordingly, setting at rest the controversy about this high profiled project of the Government of Orissa whose real object was under dark clouds from the very beginning.

Fighting for Goa's fort

In a significant move towards privatisation in Goa, the state cabinet has decided in principle to denotify Reis Magos Fort to facilitate establishment of a hotel within the fort.

The decision comes in the midst of a raging controversy over the future of the north Goa Tiracol Fort, located in the Pernem Taluka, which was till recently run as a resort by the Goa Tourism Development Corporation.

Reis Magos Fort is probably the oldest Portuguese-built fort in the state. Constructed between 1551 and 1554 and remodelled in 1707, Reis Magos was the sole defender of Panjim until Fort Aguada came up in 1612.

Ever since the GTDC withdrawal from Tiracol became public knowledge, with the publication of the tender notices last month, environmentalists, trade union bodies and various political organisations have been campaigning against the move.

Chief among them have been the green watchdog Jagrut Goenkarachi Fouz (Vigilant Goans’ Army), which organised what its secretary, Roland Martins, calls “the first of the agitations against the privatisation of Tiracol Fort”.

The Chief Minister, however, emphasised that the opponents of the move were “ill-informed” and said the state government is not handing over the ownership of the sites, but only giving permission for tourism-related activity to be carried out by private entrepreneurs.

De Souza stated that Tiracol Fort had, in fact, been denotified several years ago to give the resort’s restaurant contract to a private caterer, while GTDC continued to maintain the lodging premises.

As against the Rs 1.5 lakh earned by the resort last year, the lease earning is expected to be Rs. 2.5 lakh. This, according to the tourism department sources, will help fund substantial repairs of the monument. The lease period will be initially seven years.

Tiracol is one of the three large coastal forts that will eventually be converted to privately managed resorts. The other two are Reis Magos and Cabo Da Rama in south Goa.

According to IGF, the “selling out” of Tiracol will provide a backdoor entry for one of the world’s most exclusive resort chains, the Club Mediterranean (Club Med), which operates resorts on islands in a number of European and South-East Asian countries.

Goans, intensely possessive of their environment and cultural heritage — both Hindu and Christian — see the denotification of Reis Magos as an assault on their heritage.
War Over Lord Ayyappa’s Wilderness

Latheef Kizhissery

Sabarimala, the seat of Lord Ayyappa, again became a situs for legal controversy. Two years ago it was in the news due to a legal controversy concerning the entry of women: the Kerala High Court upheld the contention of the temple authorities that ‘Lord Ayyappa didn’t like entry of women between 10 and 50 years of age’. In 1993, a controversy over non-allotment of 200 acres of land to the Devaswom Board due to lack of action by the government of Kerala drew Sabarimala into the corridors of the Kerala High Court. Now, Lord Ayyappa’s seat has become the point for another legal war in the Kerala High Court.

The present legal battle seems to be strange in many ways. Kerala High Court created some sort of history by admitting a letter by one Sarasappan of Aluva (Alwaye) as a writ petition. Mr. Pallath Sarasappan, a self-identified devotee of Lord Ayyappa, wrote a letter to one of the judges of the Kerala High Court in which he complained that the proposed Sabarimala tourism development project would destroy the religious sanctity of Sabarimala. This letter was treated as a Public Interest (PI) Petition because the Court felt that the matter required detailed consideration.

According to Sarasappan’s letter, the Sabarimala tourism project involves construction of five-star hotels, roads and other structures for tourists, especially to cater the needs of foreign tourists. He stated that the commercialised tourism proposed by the Government of Kerala would destroy the cultural ethos, historical background and religious sanctity of the Sabarimala temple and adjoining forest.

Mr. Sarasappan was summoned by the Court to give a sworn statement concerning his complaints which was recorded on March 17, 1994. Then the Chief Justice placed the matter on the judicial side of the Bench hearing Dewaswom cases. The Bench, consisting of K.B. Balanarayana Marar and K. K. Usha, perused the complaint along with an article on Sabarimala Tourism Development Project published in the Mathrubhoomi Weekly. This article - “Sabarimala Development: “Saranamillayyappa” (Saranamillayyappa: Oh, Ayyappa, there is no solace) - was written by the eminent historian-culturologist, Dr. Rajan Gurukkal who is a professor in the School of Social Science, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, was published in the Feb. 20-26, 1994 issue of the Mathrubhoomi Weekly. The judges while admitting the letter as PI Writ, expressed the view that the interest of Sabarimala pilgrims and devotees of Lord Ayyappa require further probing into the matter.

The Court issued notices to the Kerala government and the Travancore Dewaswam Board which is the authority managing the Sabarimala temple. In a highly appreciable expression of judicial activism, the Court directed that the public should be invited to the court to have their say in the matter. Therefore, the Court directed the Kerala government to give publicity to this matter through its Public Relations Department, using the Press, radio and TV. General Public are invited to become parties to the case and can file statements in the Court.

Germs of the Legal Battle

Sabarimala was identified for major tourism development in the Master Plan for Tourism Development of the Government of Kerala. This Plan was prepared for the Department of Tourism, Govt. of Kerala, by a consultancy firm at Cochin (Kochi) and submitted in 1986. The Master Plan proposed almost every hill, dale, valley and backwater, every villager and tribal of Kerala as a touristic commodity to be developed and sold to tourists, especially foreign tourists. Sabarimala is one among the many forest areas identified for massive tourism development and it is the only one of its kind in the Pathanamthitta District.

The proposals in the Master Plan started taking concrete shape during 1991-92 as a result of the New Economic Policy and the arrival of the National Action Plan for Tourism of the Government of India. Media attention was sharply focused on Sabarimala during late 1993 due to strongly worded judgement of the Kerala High Court against the government of Kerala which criticised the government for its lack of action on the application made by the Dewaswom Board for allotment of land for development of Sabarimala. In this case, the Dewaswom Board asked for a 200 acre land, spread over Sabarimala, Pampa shores and Billakkal, intended to increase the facilities for pilgrims. The major thrust of Dewaswom Board’s argument in this case depended on the Kerala government’s proposal to give forest land to encroachers. During this legal battle between the government and the Dewaswom Board, major newspapers supported the Dewaswom Board through their finely worded editorials. Public opinion at this stage was also very clear. Majority of the people were against massive deforestation of Sabarimala through five star tourism development but demanded upgrading and spreading of facilities needed by pilgrims who are mainly from the middle class and lower income groups of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and other areas of India.

The government of Kerala suddenly became alive and started proposing massive plans for tourism development, including the Special Tourism Area, Bekal Fort, and Sabarimala. The Chief Minister, Mr. K. Karunakaran, who holds the Tourism Portfolio, made statements in the Kerala Assembly to the effect that the only way out of the financial crisis of the State is development of mass tourism all over Kerala.

There was a kind of covert tug of war going on between the central forest and environment ministries and the government of Kerala.
over the question of denotifying reserve forests in the Sabarimala region and converting them to non-forest use. Meanwhile, massive programmes for converting Sabarimala into a major tourist centre was made in a meeting held on September 13, 1993 which was chaired by the Chief Minister. The meeting decided to provide the required land to the Dewaswom Board and decided to construct additional roads to reduce the steep climb, separate power supply arrangements, star hotels and other high-tech facilities including amusement parks.

Environmentalists and Ayyappa devotees raised their objections to the five star tourism proposals but government defended its stand by projecting tourism as the only viable industry for saving Kerala from its present economic crisis (Treasury was closed by the government; Kerala’s per capita income is lower than the Indian average. No one wants to speak about the development myths and the underbelly of Kerala and really viable solutions). Ayyappa devotees said that five star facilities are not things required; basic facilities like toilets and way-side amenities at cheap cost is what pilgrims needed. Converting Sabarimala into a metropolis through massive construction of buildings and roads will make the place like Tirupati or Guruvayur which is against the soul and spirit of the Ayyappa cult.

The National Action Plan for Tourism, the GATT Final Agreement and the privatisation drive accelerated a tourism boom through foreign equity participation, subsidies and tax deductions to the hotel industry. The Sabarimala tourism development plan is sufficient to make it a concrete jungle. Proposed developments are aimed at the upper class domestic tourists and foreigners.

Mr. Sarasappan’s letter turned writ is challenging the plans to convert Sabarimala into an upper class tourist enclave. The real feelings behind the challenge are easily identifiable. Sabarimala is already under pressure from buildings and other infrastructure facilities. Pilgrims coming to Sabarimala can realise the intense spiritual experience of walking through the forest, the simple/spartan life to be followed during the pilgrimage and its overall similarity to a tribal/indigenous culture. All these will be lost once five star tourism enters the place with its high-tech, high-class and dollar-centric values and methods.

Peoples’ Response

People of Kerala and Ayyappa devotees all over the world are genuinely thankful towards the High Court of Kerala for providing an opportunity of being heard in a matter close to their heart.

Environmentalists, Gandhians, Revolutionaries, and Ayyappa devotees have started campaigning against the unviable tourism development in Sabarimala and other places, including the Special Tourism Area, the Bekal Fort etc. They are calling upon Ayyappa devotees and other concerned citizens to join forces to oppose the tourism development plans, particularly in Sabarimala. It is interesting to note that the Bekal STA project will affect number of temples, mosques, schools and other public establishments in the area.

Activists in Kerala are trying to consolidate their actions against the Pooyamkutty Hydro-electric project, the Sabarimala Tourism Project and the Bekal Special Tourism Area Project. The government is trying to suppress peoples protests by using its police machinery. Recently, an activist who was protesting against the Bekal Festival, organised to promote Bekal tourism by the government of Kerala, was arrested while he was on Satyagraha in Kanhangad, the town nearest to Bekal Fort. He was under detention till the end of the festival which began on May 21 and ended on May 25, 1994. The government of Kerala is conducting massive disinformation campaign through the media by projecting that Tourism is the best industry for Kerala. Activists in Kerala call upon all concerned to join forces against unviable tourism development.

Dear Friends,

Sabarimala temple premises, the Pampa shores and the adjoining natural, garden-like forest are already facing destruction due to existing roads, shops, and other concrete buildings. Now plans are being made to make Sabarimala a major tourist industry centre which proposes to build new roads, star hotels, railways etc.

Sabarimala tourism development will result not only in destroying the sanctity of the pilgrim centre inside the forest but also destroy the fragile environment surrounding Pampa, its tributaries and the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary. Sabarimala Tourism Development Plans are against the interests of all Ayyappa devotees and the entire people of Kerala. These plans will lead to total destruction of the limited evergreen forest remaining on the Earth’s surface.

This is the situation in which the Kerala High Court accepted the letter of Pallath Sarasappan as a Public Interest Writ Petition, challenging the tourism development in Sabarimala. The problem is urgent and important for all of us and, it is essential that maximum number of people and organisations should join the case as parties, and there should be efforts to mobilise public opinion through all means.

Quilon (Kollam) 18-06-1994
A. Mohan Kumar
CISEC
Kottamukku, Quilon (Kollam)
Kerala 691 013
Ph: 72765
Bekal Festival
An Observer’s Balance Sheet

Dhanaraj Keezhara

This article was transliterated from Malayalam by K.A. Latheef. Dhanaraj’s artistic perceptions and grassroots consciousness helped him to analyse the Bekal festival with a down-to-earth perspective.

A “festival” was held in the Bekal Fort during May 21-25, 1994. This packaged extravaganza was organised to mark the tenth anniversary of the Kasaragode district. The overt objective of it was tourism promotion in Bekal and all over the Kasaragode district.

Bekal Fort and Bekal village were identified, by the National Action Plan for Tourism, as a Special Tourism Area. STAs are those identified for “enclave model” tourism.

The Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Academy (Kerala Music and Theatre Academy) organised a “Traditional Arts Festival” to give the “festival” an exotic cultural colour.

A number of ritual arts of Kerala were “performed”, without the essential Katu (Sacred groves), Thara (sacred Stage) and temple required for their performance, on the stages built up on the Fort.

There were less than 100 people to see these “packaged performances”. Of course, there were 200 policemen to protect the VIPs and spectators. In addition, there were around 100 government officials, dining and slumbering-literally enjoying a holiday at the cost of the tax payers.

Remember the beginning of the Gajamela – the “great elephant march”? It was held in the Thokkinkad Midan, at Thrissur, with local people as spectators. Now, what is happening? Gajamela is held for a few foreign tourists exclusively in the Municipal Stadium, spending lakhs from the State coffers. Tickets are sold for dollars but losses run into lakhs. This “dollar festival” is draining the coffers of Kerala, to entertain the inhuman tastes of a few foreigners.

We are living in an era in which the individual has been alienated from her/his self through the manipulative process of the market and the State. The community has been alienated from its harmonised self in a diasporic shattering enforced by technological rationalisation, corporate takeover of community life, and state-sponsored marginalisation. Remember, this is an era in which crores are spent to tell mothers to breast-feed their children. The double edged sword of exploitation and marginalisation inherent in this reality is a proof of the politics of profit lurking behind it.

When rituals are uprooted from a community its value-bases collapse. Ritual arts are individual-centred but it draws and depends on community consciousness and community participation. Most of the folk/traditional arts carry an element of ritual as a major factor constituting its nature.

“Traditional Arts Festival” held at Bekal Fort seems to be an anti-thesis to the reality of both ritual as well as art. Packaging ritual arts can’t help to protect or improve ritual art; the evolution can’t take place on the stage where the spectators are either ‘buying’ it or getting it as ‘donation’. The evolution of ritual arts is dependent on a community which participates in it with their soul and body, not merely with their eyes.

Community Consciousness in Ritual Arts

Ritual arts is the totality of its existence and impact on society rather than its artistic form. They are not ‘forms’ to be staged. They have to be performed out of a community’s collective perceptions concerning the world and their life in its evolutionary reality.

Ritual arts represent one of the major elements of the whole cultura-ritual milieu emerging out of a community’s collective perceptions concerning the world, and their life, in its evolutionary reality.

Ritual arts constitute a major part of the life of the community and it serves a lot of needs of the community. Ritual arts represent political, economic and cultural dimensions of community life. We should be conscious of the wholeness of the ritual arts, their community specificities, their forms and inherent symbolism, their time-space dynamics in order to understand and participate in them. If we are not aware of the complex collectivity of community consciousness inherent in ritual arts, we will gaze at them as mere commodities to be consumed as exotic entertainment. This is what happened in Bekal Festival and similar extravaganzas organised by the government agencies to ‘promote’ tourism.

A major factor to be considered is the sanctity of ritual, the element of sacrifice and reciprocity inherent in them, and their erotic expressions symbolising the dimensions of creativity. Folk arts all over the world carry these realities. This is due to the fact that human life and its basic problems are almost the same all over
the world. Ritual arts represent human dynamism and life puzzles. They evolve within the time-space continuum of human life, strengthening their form and meaning through relying on the realities of human life, including the imaginary world of individual minds.

Sacred and Profane Elements in Ritual Arts

The ‘past’ in ritual arts can’t be tied up to a particular place of the recent past and its reality. Ritual arts emerged over a very long period, energised themselves from manifestations of life of the communities and their environs. The vital energies of the communities maintained them until today. Freedom, in its true sense, in the ritual arts refers to their dynamism of adjusting and adapting to the situational demands of time, space and sound that emerge during their performance. Ritual arts can’t be packaged into ‘time slots’, space-limits, and sound requirements of the so-called ‘civilised’ peoples.

From Ritual Life to Theatricality

A clear character of modern-urban life is its theatricality. We should distinguish between theatrical life and ritual life before analysing ritual arts in the post-modern context. Heterogeneous crowd or harmonised community is an essential requirement of ritual arts. ‘Viewing’ is absent from rituals; there is participation only.

When the ritual arts are staged in the cities and when the tourists come to the villages to ‘see’ the ritual arts there results a binary opposition. The performer and the performance become an object of gaze of the viewers. Tourist psyche results in non-participation, dispassionate observation and objective analysis. This is contrary to the reality which should be present in the performance of a ritual art. Each member of the community has a role to be ‘lived’ in ritual arts—not to be ‘played’ as happens in city life and stage arts.

When tourists go to a village to see the ritual arts they have nothing to do, they have no role to be lived and they are alien to the reality. Naturally, tourists become consumers of the scenes. Is this right or wrong? I don’t know. What should be the real nature of tourism in relation to ritual arts? I don’t know. The answers depend on your perceptions and consciousness concerning right and wrong in relation to the life of communities and the complex politico-economic and socio-cultural realities.

A Note of Caution

I am sure about one fact: Nowhere in the world has tourism development assisted to have a positive dynamics for the ritual arts or ritual artists’ life. Tourism development assisted to commodify ritual arts at their profane level, and helped to develop ‘beggar syndrome’ among the ritual artists.

History is evidence to the fact that cultural manipulation and commodification of ritual arts are one of the major reasons for destruction of many communities and their self-reliant life.

“One can only speculate on the next state of symbolic and ritual crystallization, and how soon it will appear. Yet on this, one can be dogmatic. However different the rituals and interaction forms turn out to be from ‘traditional religion’, the demands of the human condition will begin to reshape cultural dimensions to provide an effective emotional outlet for the fundamental crises of existence, both for the individual and the group” (Eliot D. Chapple).

The kanaka maoli (“Native Hawaiian”) experience of tourism has been paradoxical. In that, although it has introduced the world to the compelling values of our traditional culture — such as the "aloha spirit" — it has also prostituted our culture as a tool for marketing and entertainment. Although it has the potential of creating jobs and contributing to our economies, it has also been a root source of several social, cultural and economic problems. And, although it creates opportunities for cultural sharing, it most often takes from our communities and gives little back.

As the indigenous people of Hawaii, we have always welcomed visitors in the spirit of ho'okipa (“hospitality”) and we have substantially adopted Western ways. Yet, we are increasingly adversely affected by the massive scale and intrusive character of tourism in our islands, and we have recently begun rediscovering and reaffirming our traditional ways. We assert a prior claim to these islands and their resources, and we are now reasserting our fundamental responsibility for aloha 'aina (“love for the environment”).

We recognize the right of all people to leisure and the freedom of travel for recreation in its fullest sense. We welcome those who respect our dignity and who are willing to adapt to our ways of living, thinking and relating. Our right to reshape and continue traditional lifestyles and to maintain our privacy is, however, of greater importance.

We observe that many tourists are not satisfied with their personal experience of our Islands. Many are motivated by an alternative vision of travel based on the ideals implicit in spiritual journey, pilgrimage, personal renewal, life discovery and learning. Crass commercialism, massive over-development and institutionalized racism limit their ability to connect with the “paradise” promised by tourism advertising. They yearn for precisely the kind of personal experience that kanaka maoli are most capable of facilitating.

An authentic tourism is, therefore, one in which kanaka maoli participate, not as objects, but as active subjects. Not as dependents on tourism as the driver of our economies, but as shapers of the culture, the ‘aina, and the spirit of ho'okipa on which tourism depends for its success.

Despite the oppression which has stunted our development and limited our power to control our own lives and environment, we are discovering anew our inherent power based both on our inalienable rights and on the potential for significant support for our struggle from tourists themselves.

Therefore, any decision to further develop tourism has to be weighed carefully with its possible outcomes, both positive and negative, as well as the opportunity costs of developing other economic sectors, which are often more crucial for our subsistence. Moreover, we assert the right of consensual participation in all decisions relating to tourism development which are likely to affect our life in any way. The interests of our indigenous people are primary in such decision-making.

Responsible Tourism
We demand ethical business practices from the tourism industry. In relating to kanaka maoli as hosts we expect the industry and its clients to abide and be governed by laws and regulations of our islands and not to abuse their relative advantage provided by superior economic power.

Moreover, images used in advertising and promotion material should be fair and honest representations of kanaka maoli reality. Our material poverty is not "exotic," certainly not to us. Tourists should be encouraged to expand their recreational and entertainment experience to include education about the places and peoples of our islands which they visit. Our women, children, cultural sites and artifacts should not be turned into tourist attractions and subjected to exploitation in any form. In order to provide tourists with an enjoyable time, our people have to work much harder, often under dehumanizing conditions. We appreciate tourist sensitivity towards those of us who serve in hotels, restaurants, shops and related ventures.

Finally, rapid tourism development in recent decades has meant that a substantial investment in upgrading our infrastructure, such as airports, roads, and utilities, has crowded out urgently needed investment in our ecosphere, such as reef, forest and community life. For these reasons and for the foreseeable future, kanaka maoli concerns for culture and the aina must take precedence in determining the allocation of available investment funds.

The Hawaii Ecumenical Coalition is a non-profit organization supported by several major denominations and religious associations.

Why is Xenophobia and Foreign travel increasing at the same rate?

Kathrin Schaeppi

The Swiss tourist is always welcome - at least for his/her money - in foreign countries. During a short vacation each Swiss has the opportunity to become king, queen... or neo-colonialist. His or her ethnocentrism — "I am better than you" — and feeling of well-being is strengthened for a brief exciting moment. For, are my values and beliefs, not more civilized/cultured than yours (says the Japanese, the Chinese, the Moslem, the American, the Swiss, the Green Frog)? Ahh! Beautiful Ethnocentrism is worldwide! With the ethno-watch and ethno-fever we import/export ethno-xenophobia.

Upon returning to Switzerland from the phantastical foreign land — bubbles are burst. Each and every king and queen turns back into a frog, facing the hardship of collecting enough flies for everyday survival, just like all the other frogs. I'm no longer a special frog. I - Mr. or Ms. Green Frog — know I am better but don't really feel it any more. Actually, I feel like an ordinary frog and feel cramped and crowded by the different purple frogs. I start seeing purple frogs as the scapefrogs for my misery, my fears, my insecurities; as the cause of my identity complex. I feel much better when the other stands below me on the frog ladder.

If I reject my self-imposed superior status as green frog, I would have to face feelings of guilt. A guilt that rises from a recognition of past and present purple frog xenophobia. I'd have to admit my fears. "What if the purple frog takes revenge?" For convenience sake I might just imagine that I never was xenophobic — only the other green frogs are — but that I'd have to leave that behind. At first it might be awkward and difficult getting to know purple frogs. I might take the submissive position and plead with purple frogs to tell me what to do or to tell me I'm really not that bad.

Eventually I'd regain an inner strength by using green power to positive ends. I'd take on the responsibility to continually fight against xenophobia in everyday situations in my own interest. This could ultimately result in new challenges, like a relationship reaching across colours. And then... just maybe... I wouldn't feel to escape on vacation as often. And of course, the purple and green frogs would live happily ever after noticing their colours but not de-valuing them.

Foreign Funding for Tourism

Over $150 million worth of equity investment has been proposed by foreign companies in the tourism sector. The funding will cover over 65 joint venture hotels and allied projects, covering different segments of the tourism industry, and has been approved by the government.

This investment is only in the form of equity, and the total, including loans and other components would be at least three times this amount or $450 million-plus. All this investment in the sector is scheduled during the next couple of years.

The investment pledges are said to be a direct result of the government allowing automatic clearance for equity holdings up to 51 per cent. Above this level, approvals are given by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board. Tourism enjoys priority sector status.

Officials in the aviation and tourism ministries have urged the government to slash expenditure tax and expect the relief in the coming budget. The tax is 20 percent on all luxury hotels over and above the state tax, 20 percent in Tamil Nadu and 15 per cent in Karnataka. The total tax burden thus amounts to 35 to 40 per cent.

Then there are hotels other than those run by the ITDC which have to pay 10 per cent service charge, thus raising the total tax burden in such cases to as high as 50 per cent. This is counter-productive to tourism growth.

The tourism department has therefore also urged the states to lower taxes. The industry suffered a setback in 1992-93 after the riots in Bombay and other places. This year the situation seems to have improved. Some 215,000 foreign tourists arrived in December. The official estimate is that their numbers would be far greater this year.
**Unterwegs in Sachen Reisen: Tourismusprojekte und Projekttourismus in Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika**

Hausler, N et al 1993

Third-World tourism has many faces. Not only do 'recreational' and 'cultural' tourism play a vital and dubious role - but also 'projecttouism', 'development-touism' or 'scientific-touism' from the North to the South.

One example of organised scientific tourism is the ASA-exchange-programme of the German Carl-Duisberg-Society. It has been organizing and financing tours since 35 years in Third-World countries, for German students. During their 3-month stay the participants make contacts with their respective partner organisations - mostly Non-Governmental Organisations working on development issues - and deal with a previously chosen theme. The collected data and experiences are presented in a final report.

The 1993 published ASA-Studybook No. 26 contains totally 14, partly revised, final reports, which all deal with several aspects of Third-World-tourism and its often 'exotic' appearances. Therefore this book has a dualistic perspective: It is not only the result of scientific tourism, it also brings Third-World tourism, including scientific tourism, and its criticism into focus.

The spectrum of themes is as vast as the geographical frame of the studies. The 400-page book contains works about tourism policy in Nicaragua during and after the revolution, tourism and protection of environment in Costa Rica, tourism planning in Zanzibar or about the social impacts of tourism in Dalya (Turkey). But the priority of the studies is based on Asian countries.

N. Hausler's report about the Goan example of tourism-induced acculturation describes the changes in Goan society, e.g. undermining of sexual norms, prostitution, drug consumption, takeover of western life-styles and the loosening of the traditional, hierarchical social structure. Hausler notices, that cultural conservation, as is demanded from Goan 'traditionalists' from the catholic upper class, as well as from some critics of Third-World tourism, is not possible. But the question posed by Hausler herself, how the acculturation phenomena could have a positive effect on the Goan society, remains unanswered.

C. Kamp analyses in her study of Indian domestic tourism - on the basis of the examples of Kovalam, Varkala and Kanyakumari - the conflicts between foreign and domestic tourists. She says that, in particular, pilgrimage tourism comes close to the ideal of soft and environmental-friendly tourism. But the fast growing Indian 'amusement tourism' takes over the western patterns of behaviour and consumption, including all their negative impacts.

The influence of tourism on the traditional Balinesian music is the topic of H.W. Breckenkamp's article. He found out, that the Balinesian distinguish sharply between the religious and social meaning of their music and its use as a tourist attraction.

A. Schauber tells us about a very special group among the Farangs (foreigners) on the Thai island of Koh Samui: The former tourists, who settled permanently on the island, run tourism enterprises like restaurants. At first they believed they found paradise, but soon conflicts with the inhabitants and legal problems made their lives difficult. Schauber concludes that, settler tourists are not orientated towards their host society but towards, the foreign tourist community to which they belong, even after some years, and whose needs the Farangs commercial services satisfy.

An overall view on a particularly dark chapter of tourism in Thailand is J. v. Krause's "Child prostitution". Her report also informs us about the international campaign against child prostitution. But the 'normal' tourism in Thailand also causes a lot of harmful processes like, inflation; changes inland use patterns; urbanisation etc., as A. Pleumaron found out. But Pleumaron, who at present works for the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism in Bangkok, shows examples of citizen actions against the "destructive dynamics of tourism".

Tourism has had a comparable impact in China, where tourism has been promoted very hard since the late 70s, as A. Gerstlader, P. Krieg and E. Sternfeld report. But in contrast to India or Thailand, a public voiced criticism of tourism development is impossible in China. The fate of the democratic movement has silenced the critics.

The most self-critical contribution to the book deals with the conflicting role of tourism in India. The authors B. Funke and U. Schnabel pose a difficult question: Is the collection of data and material in Third World countries through students from the developed countries, for the purpose of writing a thesis etc., already Imperialismo Scientifico? The NGO's studies in India have very different experiences with foreign visitors. They vary from immense reaction to even the bare presence of the foreigners to positive feelings of solidarity between the visitors and their hosts. Anyway, project tourism is a one way street from the North to the South, as the authors add — with regret. Least but not last, the book itself is proof of this condition — it includes not one single line from a non-German student!!

Besides this fundamental deficiency, the book is an exciting and wellmade publication, which is not only interesting for experts in the field of tourism but also its critics. The vast majority of the articles are not written in an elitist scientific language, and many headlines, tables, maps and references facilitate the use of the book. One hopes that the announced translations in English and Spanish will appear soon.

Reviewed by Christian Stock
Help!

This is an urgent call to save two sq kms of pristine tropical rain forest in the sensitive Western Ghats of Kerala. 500 acres of cardamom forest (Downton Estate) in Idukki district, an enclosure within the Periyar Tiger Reserve and Reserve forests are up for sale. The land is a habitat of a diverse variety of flora an fauna including endangered and endemic ones like Lion-tailed Macaques, Nilgiri Marten, Small Travancore Flying Squirrel, Great Indian Hornbill etc.

Cardamom plantations have been uneconomic for some years and many plantations have changed hands to the timber lobby and eventually to settlers. Since cardamom requires shade, an active plantation will have a thick canopy of big trees like Cullinia Exarillata, Myristica Dactylics, Palaquim Elepticum etc. which are also endemic.

There has been no human activity (including harvesting of cardamom) in Downton for quite a number of years. Large mammals like Asiatic Elephant, Tiger, Gaur, Sambhar etc. which are part of the adjoining tiger reserve and forests have found their niche here. Once sold, all the large trees will be clear felled, the land then parcelled into 500 or more small holdings and sold to land-hungry settlers from the plains. This will eventually lead to in-migration of a large number of people who would encroach upon the adjoining tiger reserve and forests for their fuel, fodder, timber and game needs. Loss of corridor and this anthropogenic intervention will defeat the purpose of Project Elephant and Tiger Reserve.

A century-old magnificent bungalow in Downton became the Dera Malai camp of Dr. Salim Ali, during his study of birds in Travancore.

We want to "buy" this land and preserve it as a CHILDREN'S BIO-DIVERSITY RESERVE. The owners, who are themselves eco-sensitive are ready to part with the land at a subsidised price of Rs. 30 million. (The market price of the timber alone, in Downton is estimated to be Rs. 500 million).

Peoples' conservation initiatives of this sort is a new concept in India. Elsewhere in Costa-rica, Equador, Bolivia, Oakland etc. our friends have been successful in saving such sensitive eco-systems from destruction. Children are in the forefront of the efforts to save Amazonian rain forests.

It is our sincere wish that along with campaigning and critiquing the system, activists should also be involved in efforts towards preservation/conservation of unique eco-systems under threat. We must include such initiatives also as part of our agenda.

We are working on this concept and will be doing the necessary groundwork. We will periodically brief you about the progress we make. In the meantime, would you be so kind to send your comments/advice etc. at your earliest to A. Mohan Kumar.

Dear Friends,

This is to announce the establishment of WOODLANDS NETWORK, parent of the ECO TOURISM PROGRAM in the Uva Province of Sri Lanka. Why eco? For us ECO sums up all of ECOlogy, ECOonomy and ECUmenism, taking OIKOS in its primary significance as the home, which has a roof, facilities and food for all. There is more to it. In the local culture a wood/forest is not a place where there are no people... any cluster of trees, in the Sinhala language, is called a forest, so that villages with their mixed gardens from a distance look like a forest. So do tea estates if sufficient shadow trees are grown.

The NETWORK links, not just tourist points and people, but here in Uva such initiatives like, estate diversification, analog forests and forests for people, country homes and rural lodges, herbal medicines and drinks, spicy food culture and cookbooks, women entrepreneurship (marketing, mushrooms, quality tea and estate brands, spices and nutrition). The NETWORKERS are all involved in grassroots work, and they see work in the tourist industry as part of working for rural industrialisation of the sustainable kind. In Sri Lanka all world religions have deep roots, so that visitors and guests are taken into sacred sites not limited to temples, mosques, churches, monasteries and convents. The NETWORK has other programs: trading, computer services, training, publications, languages and communication. Such activities, necessarily, are overlapping and mutually supporting — one of the reasons why the NETWORK core members are few and polyvalent, with women playing a decisive role in all programmes.

A few specialities:
- homely guesthouses and homestays, personal contacts, nature & culture interwined.
- offer to junior graduates for research, language teaching, management etc. as part of their university education.
- senior citizen programs for long -term, and therefore, affordable stays.
- honorary brokerage of joint ventures for modest investments with profits on both sides.
- demystification of "the East" with the help of spices, laughter, sharing, and intermation.

WOODLANDS Network collaborates with government, through National and Provincial Ministries of Tourism, and the Ceylon Tourist Board, the Uva Hoteliers Association, travel agents and organisations, NGOS and informal groupings, while protecting its own policies and programs. One common concern is the training of regional and 'site guides'.

WOODLAND NETWORK, 30/6 Esplanade Road, Bandarawela, Sri Lanka. Tel. 057-2733, Fax 54572712, attn. Woodlands.

James Zacharia
Asst. Wild life Warden, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady, Kerala.

D. Nandakumar
Sr. Lecture in Geography University College, Trivandrum, Kerala.

A. Mohan Kumar
Western Ghats Fraternity, C/o CISEC, Kollam, Kerala.
Hippie Kingdom: Hampi

M. M. Shivaprakash, Kannada University, Hampi

Hampi is an abode of temples. The architectural and cultural splendours of Hampi are numerous: the musical columns, the stone chariot, the Narasimha monolith, the gopuram of Viroopaksha temple... The list is endless. The tourists throng Hampi to see the historical monuments and to feel the moments of tragic quietness.

Hampi has been identified as the Kishkindha of Ramayana, and many a places in Hampi bring back the memories of the epic: the Pampa lake, the Matanga Mountain, the spot where Vali was killed... In short, people regard Hampi as the Varanasi of the South.

Presently, Hampi has been attracting the foreign tourists. It is no exaggeration that the place is being visited not only for the antiques of the Vijayanagar Empire but also for purchasing drugs, especially opium, charas and ganja.

"Two eyes and two ears are not enough to comprehend Hampi in toto" said Abdul Razak, the Persian traveler who came to Hampi in the 15th Century. Ironically, the place has been invaded by the hippies, expelled from the vicinities of Goa. It is a common site near the holy places of Hampi that the semi-clad foreigners are seen hugging or kissing each other. Apart from polluting the austere atmosphere, such instances provide enough threat to our ethical standards.

The tourists who come here carry with them a number of addictions. Thus, the tourism business at Hampi sustains itself only through the sale of liquor, drugs and other aphrodisiatics. Special accommodation facilities have been created overnight for the foreigners. Congested rooms are available for a price ranging from Rs. 40 to 80 a day only for them. The local people are often turned away from the restaurants while the foreigners enjoy the sumptuous meal. There are instances of these tourists staying there for months together. With the regular supply of drinks and drugs although the night, it would seem impossible for them to leave this heaven!

The school children and the students from other places who would have come on excursions relish the semi-clad splendour that unleashes all over Hampi on the advent of these foreigners. These people serve as the role models for the locals thus providing a distorted view of the so-called Western culture.

In addition to voyeurism, the locals also try to maximise their gains through cheating the foreigners by over pricing the goods and services provided. It is a fact that "Chillums" for inhaling the ganja smoke sell at a price of Rs. 100 each. There seem to be no restrictions on the movement of the hippies here.

There appears to be serious law and order problem here. The drug trafficking, bootlegging, theft and robbery are going on unabated. This is not to say that drugs were unheard of at Hampi before the advent of the hippies. The monks and savants at different corners of this holy city had been indulging in the usage of aphrodisiatics. But, they never mixed with the locals and never attempted to spoil the social serenity. The story is different today.

It was said that the merchants of yore used to sell pearls and diamonds on the streets of Hampi, measuring them by such ancient measures as "seru" and "balla". It is a historic irony that drugs are being sold on the very same pavements!

The Moonlit Nights

The foreigners gather together on the banks of Thunga during the full moons and travel across the river to reach the paddy fields of Raichur. It is anybody's guess to imagine what exactly happens to result in resounding giggles all through the night on those fields.

Sale of Antiques

The coins and other currency items of the Vijayanagar period are being sold at throwaway prices. There appear to be no restrictions on such sales. A time will come when the country may have to re-purchase these items from the foreigners!

A few quotations (by locals)

1. The moment a foreigner lands at Hampi, the locals wake up — alert with their eyes and ears.
2. Even the dogs of Hampi are in search of foreigners.
3. You can do anything at Hampi: there is none to ask and none to be afraid of.
4. A woman was recently murdered here. A student lost his genitals. There were no enquiries by the police.
5. You cannot travel alone here. Hampi is full of thieves and murderers.

Source: Published in "Tharanga", Kannada Weekly, Dt. 22/5/1994, Translated by Yatna : FIRC
Visitor Management: a Question of Balance

Is it possible to provide visitors with a quality holiday experience while at the same time placing enough constraints on their behaviour to preserve the environment and cultural identity of the destination? This is the question which is facing destination managers all over the world in the wake of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and which, as more travellers visit more destinations every year, is becoming increasingly urgent. With the growing global emphasis on sustainable development, pressure is mounting for the Travel & Tourism industry to manage visitors in harmony with long-term environmental goals as well as with the needs of the local community.

This issue of Environment and Development, the newsletter of the World Travel & Tourism Environment Research Centre (WTTERC), focuses on the challenge of visitor management. It is a daunting challenge, requiring a delicate balancing act between the personal freedom of holiday-makers and the restrictions necessary to preserve the environment they came to enjoy. Ultimately, however, as writers reiterate throughout this newsletter, both the quality of the visitor experience and the viability of the destination will depend on preserving the quality of the environment. In the long term, then, the benefits of visitor management are apparent and those destinations which achieve the right balance will reap the economic benefits. In the short term, there is a pressing need to pool the experience of destination managers, to assess the whole range of visitor management techniques, and to explore their effectiveness in particular types of destination.

The need for a critical reply to the General Assembly of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) in Madrid in Autumn 1994 in the 50th anniversary year of the Bretton Woods Institutions

An unmissable opportunity to denounce, at an international level, the policies and the interests defended by these organizations

A unique occasion to draw the attention of the Spanish peoples to the nature of the Centre-Periphery relationship

In the first week of October 1994 the General Assembly of the IMF and the WB will take place in Madrid, an event which will bring together more than 10,000 bankers, ministers, executives, politicians and journalists.

The General Assembly is the main annual meeting of the world’s supreme financial powers and the international political class. In the autumn of 1994, in Madrid, this meeting will take on a special significance due to the symbolic nature of the date, the 50th anniversary of the creation in Bretton Woods of the IMF, WB and GATT, and due to the special importance which will be given to the future of these institutions.

The Bretton Woods institutions are responsible for upholding the inequality and injustice of the present world economic order, resulting in a growing disequilibrium between the Centre (the North) and the Periphery (the South and the East), and with devastating social and environmental consequences.

They are the principal guarantors of the interests of the world’s main economic powers, giving rise to the growing concentration of wealth in the countries of the Centre, though an increasing minority in the “rich” countries is becoming progressively marginalized from the benefits of this “development”, while the immense majority of Humanity is totally excluded from enjoying the fruits of a model of progress which accelerates the depletion of natural resources and which pollutes the environment on a planetary scale.

This year the General Assembly will be preceded by a major official conference, entitled “Fifty years after Bretton Woods: The future of the IMF and the WB” which will take place on September 29 and 30.

This conference will celebrate the contribution of the institutions created in Bretton Woods in 1944 to the “development” of the peoples and the nations of the planet, emphasizing the need to endow these institutions with even more supranational powers in order to oversee an increasingly globalised economy.

The celebration of these events in Madrid, which will be accompanied by a major press and television publicity campaign, obliges ecologist, development and human rights NGOs and other social movements and organizations in Spain to take the initiative and to make as forceful and effective a reply as possible, despite the limited resources at their disposal.

It is in this context that various Spanish organizations, recognizing the extreme international relevance of these events, have been working since early 1994, in the preparation of activities to reply to the celebration of these meetings in Madrid, and to denounce the role of the Bretton Woods institutions as the main defenders of unjust international economic relationships.
Workshop on Environmental Movements in Asia

Leiden, 27-29 October 1994

Organized by the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS, Leiden) and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS, Copenhagen)

Oriental cultures have often been portrayed as a harmonious unity of mutual respect, complementarity and symbiosis between man and nature. Nonetheless, Asia has had its fair share of environmental disasters: from industrial discharges which have killed thousands of people in Japan, to deforestation in Southeast Asia and the Himalayan foothills causing serious erosion and floods. Population pressure and new lifestyles have placed formerly plentiful resources under stress and people are set against each other in pursuing their self interests.

Environmental movements in Asia therefore provide scholars with a broad spectrum of questions for investigation. How do the Asian movements differ from each other and how are they different from their western counterparts in their selection of campaigns and in their internal structures? What are the philosophical bases of these organizations and what do they tell us about Asian attitudes towards nature?

Tentatively four main avenues for addressing such questions (moving from the specific to the general) have been suggested:

1. Many organizations have been established to combat industrial pollution. They are often local groups organized ad hoc to combat a particular polluter, as was the case in Minamata in Japan where fishermen and their supporters fought against a factory discharging mercury into the sea. The structure of such groups, how they mobilize their supporters and the industrial and governmental responses are important questions for research.

2. Another important problem to be investigated is the escalating conflict over both terrestrial and marine resources. Fishermen are fighting against tourist facilities; farmers against the construction of large dams, roads, and airports.

Conflicts over trees gave birth to the Chipko ("Hugging our trees") movement in India. Typically such conflicts are between centre and periphery, between the majority population against minorities, between the authorities in need of foreign exchange and local people fighting for their physical as well as for their cultural survival.

3. The conservation movements itself might cause conflict over use rights. The activities of Buddhist monks in Northern Thailand for the protection of forests have led to clashes with the hill tribes. And national parks in Pakistan have deprived local farmers of important grazing lands. Values held by a new urban middle-class concerned about the environmental degradation (caused by their own lifestyle) pose a threat to minority groups and their culture, as their access to their life-sustaining resources are being curtailed.

4. Environmental movements exist within a larger socio-cultural context and are frequently linked to other political issues such as equal rights, liberation movements, nationalistic sentiments and so forth. Not surprisingly, the attitudes of authorities toward environmental organizations differ widely from country to country and, from case to case. Economic, social and cultural factors might stimulate or inhibit mobilization of the people for environmental issues differently in, for example, the Philippines or Indonesia. In some countries, such as Japan, it seems easier to mobilize people for limited, local problems than for more general environmental issues. Comparative studies are therefore particularly relevant for a better understanding of environmental movements in Asia.

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON TOURISM

EQUATIONS is planning to organise a two-day national seminar on tourism in Kochi/Kottayam, Kerala in collaboration with School of Social Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. It is proposed to hold the seminar during the first week of December 1994.

At present, discussions about tourism issues are carried on within two different languages — of governments and industry on the one hand and of activists groups on the other. The proposed seminar is not an attempt to continue any one of these specific traditions nor even to pitch an academic tent on a suitably middle ground. On the contrary, it is an attempt to allow the different forms of knowledge to confront and engage with each other, hoping that many interstices will show themselves.

For details, please contact:
K. A. Latheef, EQUATIONS, 168, 8th Main, Behind Indira Nagar Club, Bangalore 560 008 India. Ph: 5582313 Fax: 5582627 Attn-20